

Gianni Chiarello

CONTEMPORARY BLUES SOLOING

Life beyond the standard box pentatonic.

Audio Tracks
Included



CONTEMPORARY BLUES SOLOING

By Gianni Chiarello



AUDIO TRACK LISTING

01 Major scale	21 Minor blues example
02 Major pentatonic	22 II-V-I example
03 Five box position pentatonic	23 Jog scale
04 Major pentatonic on C7	24 Jog scale example
05 Minor pentatonic on C7	25 Spread voicing phrase #1
06 Minor 3 rd phrase	26 Spread voicing phrase #2
07 Major pentatonic example	27 Spread voicing phrase #3
08 Minor pentatonic example	28 Spread voicing example
09 Blues scale	29 Triads phrase #1
10 Blues scale example	30 Triads phrase #2
11 m6 scale	31 Triads phrase #3
12 m6 pentatonic example	32 Triads phrase #4
13 m6 on minor vamp example	33 Triads phrase #5
14 m3 maj3 b5 and more scale	34 Playing 'out' example
15 Diminished scale	35 Polyrhythm phrases
16 Diminished scale example	36 Polyrhythm example
17 Bebop dominant scale	37 Over the barline phrase #1
18 Bebop dominant scale example	38 Over the barline phrase #2
19 Lydian dominant scale - from C7 to F7	39 Over the barline example
20 Lydian dominant example	40 Full solo – Rumba blues example
	41 Full solo – Funky blues example

ISBN: 978-1-4452-5888-1

This book © Copyright 2009 by Gianni Chiarello.

Unauthorized reproduction of any part of this publication by any means including photocopying is an infringement of copyright.

INDEX

- 03 Introduction
- 04 About the recorded tracks

Basic pentatonic stuff: recap!

- 05 Major/minor pentatonic
- 08 Typical blues progressions
- 10 Basic Pentatonic usage
- 13 Blues scale

Contemporary blues ideas

- 15 m6 pentatonic
- 17 Using the m3, maj3, b5, 5, 6 at the same time
- 18 Diminished scale
- 21 Jazz sounds: The Bebop Dominant scale
- 24 The Lydian Dominant scale
- 28 More jazzy stuff: II-V-I on a traditional blues
- 32 Jog scale
- 35 Spread voicings/large intervals
- 39 Superimposed triads
- 42 Playing 'out' on a blues progression

Rhythmic ideas

- 44 Polyrhythm/Note grouping applied to common riffs
- 46 'Over the barline' phrases
- 48 Straight over shuffle/Shuffle over straight

Bringing it all together: full solos

- 50 Full solo #1
- 52 Full solo #2
- 54 Closing notes
- 58 Suggested listening
- 59 Suggested reading
- 60 About the author
- 61 Templates

INTRODUCTION

(Important: please read!)

I have written this book with the intent of helping the intermediate blues/rock player to break out of the well known 'box standard pentatonic shape' and venture towards more contemporary sounds. The blues language has developed in the last few decades from just being pentatonic based, to a more articulate language, thanks to fusion and jazz influences.

I have been asked too many times during my years of teaching how to go beyond the usual pentatonic phrases that we have all heard way too many times, so I thought of collecting a wide array of ideas to steer your playing in different directions, not only harmonically, but also rhythmically.

I will present these ideas in the usual format of scale-chord relationship followed by examples as it seems to be a mainstream and well tested way to present musical concepts. I must say that historically for the blues tradition, things have rarely ever worked this way. 'Tradition' is the key word here: the way songs, melodies and musical ideas have been passed on orally from musician to musician and from one generation to the next. Music as we know it, in my opinion, is not generated by scales, but explained and crystallized by scales. This has neither a positive or negative connotation: it just 'is'. Musical ideas exist in spite of how they are explained. Just like alphabet and grammar allow us to explain and teach the way we speak, scales and musical rules allow us to explain what we play. But 'speaking' and 'language' exist before we explain them just as 'playing' and 'music' exist regardless of the explanation. Knowing how to explain musical concepts gives us an extra 'skill' to convey them both verbally and in writing.

While reading this book think of the scale presented at the beginning of the chapter as 'a collection of notes we can choose from' to create melodies or to explain or analyze existing melodies and phrases, rather than the end product. The end product is to create strong melodies that have great feel, taste and maybe a touch of originality.

I hope you will find these concepts beneficial, and that you will incorporate some of these sounds in your everyday playing. I wish you the best of luck!

Gianni Chiarello

ABOUT THE AUDIO TRACKS

I have included with this publication a recording of all the examples, in MP3 format, for reference purposes. Once you have learnt the examples 'as written' I urge you to take chances and try to incorporate parts you like in your everyday playing.

A lot of the examples utilize 'MrG Blues Tracks' as backing tracks. This is an excellent set of blues backing tracks and an invaluable tool for all level musicians, covering a wide range of tempos and styles, in all 12 keys.

You can purchase these tracks here:

<http://www.mrgcentral.com/blues>

m6 PENTATONIC

We have seen how we can use the minor pentatonic on a blues progression. In the *m6 pentatonic* the $b7^{th}$ is replaced by the major 6^{th} . So, in the C minor pentatonic [C Eb F G Bb], the Bb will be replaced by A. The new scale Cm6 pentatonic will then be C Eb F G A.



TRACK 11: m6 pentatonic in C on C7

C7

Let's hear some examples on a C major blues.



TRACK 12:

MORE JAZZY STUFF: II-V-I ON A TRADITIONAL BLUES

The II-V-I Progression (read 'two-five-one') is quite a popular sequence of chords that you will find in abundance in jazz standards and all kinds of tunes. You should have figured out by now that it is made up by the second, fifth, and first chord of the harmonized major scale. In C major that is: Dm7 G7 Cmaj7.

Let's see how to apply this to our standard blues progression. The most common way of thinking is to consider each one of the three dominant chords a momentary 'tonic'. So if we have a blues in C, the first II-V-I will be applied to C7 (Dm7, G7, C7), the second to F7 (Gm7, C7, F7) and the third one to G7 (Am7, D7, G7). The II-V will anticipate the I chord, nothing moves from its usual place. Look at the example below.

The musical notation shows a 12-bar blues progression in C major, divided into three systems of four bars each. Each bar contains a treble clef and a series of diagonal lines representing a straight 12-bar blues rhythm. Chord symbols are placed above the corresponding bars:

- System 1 (Bars 1-4): Dm, G7, C7, F7. Chords are placed above bars 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.
- System 2 (Bars 5-8): C7, Gm, C7, F7. Chords are placed above bars 5, 6, 7, and 8 respectively.
- System 3 (Bars 9-12): Dm7, G7, C7, F7. Chords are placed above bars 9, 10, 11, and 12 respectively.

All you have to do when soloing on a regular blues is to imply these added chords even though the rhythm section is playing a straight 12-bar blues.

Let's hear some examples: a quick II-V-I in C in bars 1, 2; in F in bars 5, 6.



TRACK 22:

A good way to underline the progression in a solo is to understand what the important notes are and how they move from one chord to the next. So let's see two important concepts:

1. Harmonic Rhythm

The harmonic rhythm is 'when' certain notes happen in the rhythmic flow. Let's say as a generic rule that important notes (root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th) will make your melody sound stronger if they fall on the strong beats of the bar.

2. Voice Leading

Voice leading is 'how' notes move from a chord to the next. There are 'more advisable' ways to move these notes, and in traditional theory rules can be quite strict. A good rule to keep in [...continues]